

A NEW ALOE FROM ARABIA

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(With Plate XII)

Aloe gillilandii Reynolds. Species nova, affinis *A. sabaea* Schweinf., caule simplice, racemis brevioribus, segmentis liberis differt.

Caulis simplex, c. 2 m. alta. *Folia* c. 16, dense rosulata, basi 15 cm. lata, sensim attenuata, c. 65 cm. longa, patula usque recurvula; *supra* glauca, basi fere plana superne canaliculata; *subtus* convexa; marginibus dentibus deltoideis, cartilagineis 1—1.5 mm. longis, irregulariter 5—10 mm. distantibus munita.

Inflorescentia paniculata, ramosa, c. 90 cm. alta. *Pedunculus* basi plano-convexus et 18 mm. latus, sub medio c. 8-ramosus. *Bractee* late ovato-acutae, 10 mm. longae, 8 mm. latae, scariosae, 5—7-nervatae. *Pedicelli* 12 mm. longi. *Perianthium* coccineum, late cylindrico-trigonum, 30 mm. longum, 10 mm. diametro; *segmenta exteriora* libera, 5—7 nervata. *Antherae* 3—4 mm. exsertae. *Stigma* demum 5 mm. exsertum. *Ovarium* viridulum, 6 mm. longum, 4 mm. diametro. (Plates)

Hab. Arabia, Hadhramaut, Dathina Plain, c. 130 miles N-E of Aden, coll. Prof. H. B. Gilliland, fl. Mbabane, Swaziland, 17 September 1961, Reynolds 6364 holotype (PRE), Iso (K).

Our new species is named after Professor H. B. Gilliland, (University of Malaya, Singapore) who first discovered plants in February 1952, on the Dathina Plain, about 130 miles north-east of Aden, Hadhramaut, Arabia, at an elevation of about 1,300 ft.

When sending a plant to me in 1952 Professor Gilliland remarked that plants were solitary, with simple stems up to 6—8 ft. in height. When this plant eventually flowered with me in September 1961, the description was completed.

In his book *In the High Yemen* (1942) the late Dr. Hugh Scott records (p. 41) "Aloes of unusual form, with tall pole-stems rising among dense thickets of the lower gorge of Wadi Dareija, . . . a few miles south-west of Dhala on the old track still used by camel caravans between Aden and Dhala" (Aden Protectorate, Arabia).

Scott identified it as being *A. sabaea* Schweinfurth, but this is incorrect. *A. sabaea* is a tree 25 ft. and more high, whereas *A. gillilandii* has a simple stem only 6—8 ft. tall.

Scott's photograph of these plants most strongly suggests that they are conspecific with *A. gillilandii*.

On p. 98, Scott mentions having seen "the same tall pole-stemmed Aloes" in the Saiyani District, northwards from Taizz on the road to Sana, in the Yemen. The present known distribution therefore, is from

the Dathina Plain westwards through Dhala to near Taizz in the Yemen.

I have not seen the tree *A. sabaea* Schweinfurth in the Yemen, but judging from Berger's description in *Pflanzenr.* Liliac-Aloin. 320 (1908) it seems that *A. gillilandii* is a near ally in leaves, pedicels and flowers, but has a simple stem 1—2 m. high. *A. sabaea* is described *inter alia* as having a 3—4 branched inflorescence, 15 mm. long triangular-ovate bracts, and perianth outer segments connate into a tube for 6 mm. from base.

In *A. gillilandii* the inflorescence is 8-branched, the bracts are broadly ovate-acute, 10 mm. long and 8 mm. broad, while perianth outer segments are free to base.

DESCRIPTION •

Plant with rather slender simple stem up to 2 m. or more.

Leaves about 16, densely rosulate, 15 cm. broad at base, gradually narrowing to an acute apex, about 65 cm. long, the youngest leaves spreading, the oldest recurved with their apices pointing downwards; *upper surface* unicoloured grey-green, almost flat at base, rather deeply canaliculate upwards; *lower surface* grey-green, rounded; *margins* with continuous pale-pink cartilaginous edge armed with rather soft pale-pink cartilaginous teeth 1—1.5 mm. long, irregularly 5—10 mm. apart.

Inflorescence a branched panicle c. 90 cm. high.

Peduncle basally plano-convex and 18 mm. broad, about 8-branched from below the middle, the lowest branch subtended at base by a broadly ovate-acute, many-nerved, brown, scarious bract 25 mm. long, 20 mm. broad.

Racemes cylindric-acuminate, c. 15 cm. long, 6 cm. broad, subclaxly-flowered, the buds suberect, open flowers cernuous to pendulous, the young buds at first hidden by large densely imbricate bracts.

Bracts broadly ovate-acute, basally clasping the pedicel, 10 mm. long, 8 mm. broad when pressed flat, brownish, scarious, 5—7-nerved.

Pedicels 12 mm. long, inserted in base of perianth almost at right angles.

Perianth scarlet, paler at mouth, broadly cylindric-trigonus, 30 mm. long, 10 mm. diam. across the ovary, rather thick and fleshy, the mouth upturned; *outer segments* free to base, paler at margins, 5—7-nerved, apices obtuse; *inner segments* free to base, with 3 crowded nerves forming a slight keel, apices brownish-tipped, obtuse to almost rounded and slightly revolute.

Filaments lemon, flattened, the 3 inner narrower and lengthening before the 3 outer with their *anthers* in turn exserted 3—4 mm. *Stigma* at length exserted 5 mm.

Ovary green, 6 mm. long, 4 mm. diam.



FIG. 1

PLATE XII *Aloe gillilandii* Reynolds

FIG. 1.—Plant collected by Prof. H. B. Gilliland on the Dathina Plain, 130 miles N.E. of Aden, Hadhramaut, Arabia, flowering at Mbabane, Swaziland; height 6 ft.



FIG. 2

FIG. 2. —Flowers natural size, from bud to post-pollination stage.

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